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State Department clerk's death draws inquest

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WASHINGTON, D.C. — The State Department and the National Security Agency are conducting a full-scale security investigation into the bizarre stabbing death of a State Department cryptographic clerk who had access to the nation's most secret communications.

Although the body of Ralph Madden was discovered two weeks ago, federal agencies have tried hard to keep the death and their concern as quiet as possible.

The main reason for the concern in the intelligence community is that Madden, 46, was one of fewer than 100 State Department employees with a "Penultimate Umbra" security clearance,

which gave him access to some of the nation's most sensitive electronic secrets, including spy satellite information. Madden was also one of 600 State Department employees with "crypto" clearance.

Although Madden was identified only as a "federal government employee" by investigating Fairfax County police, State

Department sources told The Morning News that the 10-year department veteran had been in charge of routing and filing highly classified message traffic in recent months.

CIA and other intelligence sources say that Madden could have been the target of a Soviet agent or could have found himself being blackmailed for classified

documents.

Sources at both the National Security Council and the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence say they may begin their own investigations. They cited similarities between Madden's bizarre murder and the September 1978 disappearance of high-level CIA official John Paisley on

access to some of the nation's top secrets. Unanswered questions about Paisley's disappearance and possible death are still being asked by investigators.

The Morning News has learned that William Bader, an aide to Secretary of State Edmund S. Muskie, has asked for a full briefing by this weekend on the cir-

cumstances surrounding Madden's death.

The National Security Agency's interest is based on the fact that the agency provides all secure code communication devices and lines to the federal government, including the State Department.

According to State Department spokesman David Passage, the department's Office of Security is investigating to determine if the case has any national security implications. So far Passage said that question has not been answered.

Twenty-four hours before Madden's body was found in an open field on the Alexandria and Fairfax County line, his shift supervisor at the State Department received an anonymous telephone call from a person describing himself as a friend saying Mad-

den would not be at work the next day.

"The body had its pockets emptied, was stabbed in the upper chest and in the back and had no identification," Passage said. "Yet someone knew Madden well enough to dial one correct extension out of more than 12,000 here to reach the supervisor he worked for. There are a lot of strange things about this incident that have us all wondering."

Fairfax County Police spokesman William Carmichael said that a citizen found Madden's body "around noon on April 30. There was no identification on the body." Carmichael said that police have ruled out sexual motives but not robbery in the

"I'm not sure it was a robbery," Passage said. "It seemed to me

they were trying to make it look like robbery."

Passage told The Morning News that the police notified the State Department on May 2, after they had identified the body as Madden's through FBI fingerprint files.

Fairfax Police say they are baffled about the killing. "We know it's a homicide. We found his car miles away in northeast Washington. But his pockets were emptied out. It could be a robbery. We don't have any evidence it's related to his job, but let me make clear we don't have any evidence it isn't," Carmichael told The Morning News.

Carmichael said that the police have not been able to determine if Madden was killed in Fairfax or if his body was simply brought to the open field where it was discovered.

Passage said that "we like to think our employees don't kill each other, but it has happened before. It could be that Madden may have had trouble with someone here."

Fellow employees of Madden agreed to talk to The Morning News on the condition that their names not be used, since they received orders from the State Department Office of Security not to discuss Madden with anyone.

A woman who worked with Madden described him as about 5-foot-10, slender, a "wonderful dresser and polite and soft-spoken."

Another person who attended a funeral service for him last week at the First Seventh-day Adventist Church of Washington, said, "Ralph was not the kind of man to get into trouble. He loved the

(cont.)